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## Weight- A Health Problem

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# WEIGHT

## A HEALTH PROBLEM

**Overweight and underweight problems are mostly a matter of how you eat and how you live. And there's usually something you can do about them.**

by Mildred Nelson Smith

**I**F YOU'RE on the too-heavy or too-thin side—don't blame fate. Except in a few cases you weigh what you do because of the foods you eat and the way you live.

There are excellent reasons why you need to check on your weight. Though most of us look enviously at the thin fellow, he may not be as physically fit as he seems. Nor is the fat person the healthiest either. Insurance studies bear out these facts: Too-heavy people die young. Being overweight tends to be a number one health problem in the United States. As for underweight people—their chances of catching diseases are greatly increased. They tend to lack energy and are nervous and irritable.

Recent Iowa studies show that more than half of the women who are 40 years of age or older (and 44 percent of those 30 years and older) weigh over 10 percent more than they should for their height and age. These same women are the ones who drink

less milk and eat less green and yellow vegetables and fruit than their friends of normal weight. If you're not more than 10 percent over or underweight, don't worry too much about it. But if your scales warn that you're well on your way toward being more than that overweight—watch out. You may be cutting several years off your life. It's also harder to recuperate after an infectious disease and you'll be dubbed a poor risk on the operating table.

The chance for death from diabetes is 8 times as great for a person 25 percent overweight as for a normal-weight individual. High blood pressure is likely to occur twice as frequently. Hardening of the arteries affects  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times as many too-heavy men as lean men and two times as many overweight women as lean women. These 25 percent overweight people are also more apt to develop heart failure or cancer.

Many people in the underweight group are under 30 years old. Being underweight has its hazards, too. The too-thin, almost skinny person, has less resistance to disease. Tuberculosis

is a common attacker of this group. During the first 20 years, the mortality of an underweight person rises 1 percent for each pound he's below average weight for his height. Surprisingly, the Iowa studies show that underweight persons often make the same poor choices in food that overweight persons do.

With all these warnings, it may appear that being overweight or underweight is a problem without any solution. There is one, however, and it works quite well, whether you need to lose or gain weight. The main solution is to eat right.

There are three main causes for overweight:

- **Eating too much** is the most important one. In 10 years' time you can gain 20 to 30 pounds just by eating an extra pat of butter a day. Often it's the ice box raids and the in-between-meal snacks that do the damage.

- **Not enough exercise** is a second cause of overweight. Your calorie needs depend upon how fast you use up calories through activity. As we grow older and slow down, our bodies don't need as many calories.

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● **Abnormal glands** are blamed for overweight far too frequently. Once in awhile they're the cause and require a doctor's attention.

A good many fake cures are on the market. These get-thin-quick remedies are often harmful and may cause physical disease or nervous disorders. Others are harmless but effective only because they kill your appetite. In taking them you run the chance of not eating enough food to keep your body in good condition.

Moderate exercise helps. But it takes a lot of exercise to get any noticeable results in reducing. Cold baths help slightly because they increase metabolism. Hot baths, steam baths or salt baths dehydrate your body only temporarily. They don't get rid of excess fat.

A good diet is the best solution. Adopt a sensible diet—not one of the fad diets of all fruit, all green vegetables, all bananas and milk or any of the others. You'll get thin with a fad diet but you're also likely to become weak, anemic, susceptible to diseases, nervous, constipated or have digestive disturbances.

Eat every meal. Don't skip breakfast. Your evening meal can be light instead.

For a good **reducing diet**, follow these suggestions:

● Eat the "Basic Seven" foods every day (see table 1).

● Count calories. Eat foods that are low in caloric content.

● Eat foods that are moderately high in protein.

● Keep your meals low in carbohydrate (starch and sugar) foods. Of course, some carbohydrates are necessary so that your body will burn fats completely.

● Limit the amount of fatty foods you eat. Don't fry foods. An ounce of fat gives  $2\frac{1}{4}$  times as many calories as an ounce of protein or carbohydrate.

● Eat foods that make you feel satisfied. These include bulky foods and protein foods such as eggs, milk and meat. Finish off a meal with filling but simple desserts such as fruit.

A good reducing diet usually contains from 1,200 to 1,400 cal-

ories for women and 1,500 to 2,000 calories for men. A 600 calorie diet isn't recommended. An 800 to 1,000 calorie diet should be carried on only under a doctor's supervision.

Here's how you can find the number of calories you need for your reducing diet. But don't try to lose more than 2 pounds a week.

1. Find the normal or ideal weight for your height and body build at 25 to 30 years if you're an adult. If you have a stocky build, you may need to be 10 to 15 percent above average weight.

2. Multiply this normal weight by 15 if you're moderately active. Multiply it by 20 if you're quite active.

3. From the number of calories found in step 2, subtract 500 to 600 calories to lose about 1 pound a week. Subtract 1,000 to 1,200 calories to lose about 2 pounds a week.

4. If you're trying to gain weight, **ADD** those calories instead.

Select foods for your diet from the list of essential foods shown in table 1. They're all low-calorie foods, but they'll give you all the necessary nutrients you need to stay in good health.

If more calories are needed eat larger servings. You'll have to pass up the high-calorie foods—fatty meats, salad dressings, gravy and sauces, pie, cake, whipped cream and extra fats.

Eat cream soups, cream, dried fruits, nuts, honey and other sweets only sparingly.

Some folks skip meals but eat a candy bar and a Coke instead. And often dieting persons have a mid-afternoon snack of ice cream, cake and coffee. For the calories in either of these lunches, just see how much good food you might have by making a wiser choice.

Lunch 1	Calories
Chocolate peanut candy bar (4 oz.).....	550
Carbonated beverage (7 oz.) .....	100
	<b>650</b>

Lunch 2	Calories
1 cup cake, iced .....	255
1 dish chocolate ice cream ( $\frac{1}{6}$ qt.).....	280
1 cup coffee with 2 tsp. cream, .....	60
3 tsp. sugar .....	54
	<b>649</b>

Lunch 3	Calories
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup tomato juice .....	25
Broiled liver (4 oz. raw) .....	160
Small potato (baked or steamed) .....	85
$1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. butter .....	48
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup broccoli .....	24
1 tsp. butter .....	32
$1\frac{1}{6}$ head lettuce .....	8
1 tsp. french dressing .....	25
1 slice whole wheat bread .....	65
1 tsp. butter .....	32
$2\frac{2}{3}$ cup strawberries .....	40
1 tsp. sugar .....	18
1 glass skim milk .....	85
	<b>647</b>

To find out how well you're doing, weigh yourself once a week at the same time of day, on the same scales with the same type of clothing on. Before lunch is a good time. Don't expect much change the first few days. Exercise consistently but moderately to lose weight. Rest frequently if you're trying to gain weight.

**TABLE I**  
**The "Basic Seven" or Essential Foods**

Food group	Amount of serving	Approx. No. of calories
Green leafy or yellow vegetable, raw often	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	2 servings give 35 calories
Citrus fruit, tomato or high vitamin C foods	1 fruit or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup	1 serving gives 50 calories
Other fruits, and vegetables, potatoes		1 small potato gives 85 calories 1 extra fruit gives 75 calories
Milk, skim or whole	1 pint (adults) 1 quart (children)	1 pint skim milk gives 170 calories 1 pint whole gives 340 calories
Protein foods*		2 servings give 340-400 calories
Whole grain or enriched cereal and bread	Try to get 1-2 slices bread per day 1 serving cereal	3 slices bread give 210 calories
Butter or fortified margarine	1 tbsp. per day or less	1 tbsp. gives 100 calories

\*Sample servings: 2 eggs; 1 egg and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cottage cheese;  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cottage cheese;  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cooked legumes; 4 oz. lean meat, poultry or fish (weighed before cooking.) Get at least one egg a day. Serve organ meats such as liver and heart often. Don't fry protein foods. Trim off all fat possible. Don't add more fat in cooking unless you measure it and count the calories.